

Lake Jericho Volunteer Fire and Rescue
Standard Operating Guideline

Subject: Backing Fire Apparatus

Effective Date: January 1, 2010

Authorized By: Chief Guy Coombs

I. Purpose

To establish a policy and procedure for backing apparatus.

II. Policy

- A. Extreme care should be used when backing. If at all possible, avoid backing a vehicle even if this requires circling the block. A back-up guide must be used at all times. If you are alone and no assistance is available, stop the vehicle while backing, exit, and check your clearances and for obstructions frequently.
- B. In all non-emergency situations, a backup guide shall be used each time a Department apparatus or specialized vehicle is backed up. In emergency situations, a guide shall be used if at all possible.
- C. Vehicles without compartment bodies and with a load rating of “one ton” or less may be backed up without a guide provided appropriate caution is followed.
- D. When backing apparatus away from the stations where the backing area is unfamiliar, personnel will use a guide.

III. Procedure

A. *Backing with a Guide.*

- 1. The person who is to serve as the backup guide shall not get off the apparatus until it has come to a complete stop. If on a public street, the backup guide shall wear a helmet or traffic vest.
- 2. If at all possible, the backup guide shall operate from the driver’s side of the apparatus and be visible in the side rear view mirror.
- 3. If backing at night, the apparatus spotlights should be aimed to the rear. A hand light shall also be used but should not be shined at the mirrors.

4. The driver will not shift the apparatus into reverse until the backup guide is in position and gives the signal to begin backing up.
5. The guide will continuously check the clearance above, below, and on each side of the apparatus. If the backing vehicle is negotiating a turn of any kind, the backer shall stop the vehicle periodically and check the blind side (right passenger side) for obstructions.
6. If more than one backup guide is being used, the driver should receive signals from only one guide at a time. Be careful to avoid confusing the driver.
7. The following standard hand signals will be used to direct the driver:
 - a) **Straight Back:** One hand above the head with palm toward face, waving back.
 - b) **Turn:** Both arms pointing the same direction with index fingers extended. (Point in the direction the rear of the apparatus needs to go.)
 - c) **Stop:** both arms above head with palms open toward driver.

B. *Backing Without a Guide*

1. Any apparatus or vehicle that normally requires a back-up guide may be backed without a guide in an emergency situation if a guide is not available. Before backing, the driver must get out of the unit, walk to the rear and check for obstacles behind the vehicle. You may use a civilian as a guide in an emergency, but make sure they are calm and collected. In this circumstance, remember that they are not trained, you may not recognize their hand signals, and they may get excited. The ultimate responsibility for the vehicle remains with you.
2. It is a fact that 85% of industrial accidents involving trucks occur during backing and that is why our SOG insists that you get a spotter whenever it is feasible. If it is not feasible, we do not need to be running vehicles across the District just to help someone back a truck into a bay; but we do need to exercise extreme caution as described in the procedure above to assure that all reasonable safety precautions are taken.
3. It will always be preferable to have a spotter when backing, so plan ahead. If you are clearing a call where another member of the Department has responded, ask one of the individuals on scene to stop by the station to assist you.
4. When backing into the stations alone, and it may be inconvenient to get someone to come by the station to help you—for example, the middle of the night or when bringing a vehicle back from the shop while

everyone is out on a call. The following procedures should be followed when you are backing alone into the stations:

- Align the engine in front of the bay (at least ten feet from the bay door), stop, and set the brake.
- Set the brake, exit the truck, and verify your alignment with the bay
- Walk to the back of the truck, assure that nothing has been placed in front of the bay while you were out. Turn on bay lighting and use additional truck lighting if needed.
- Set the brake, exit again, verify your alignment, and again check to see someone hasn't left something on the bay floor while you were out.
- Set the brake and exit the truck again, if necessary, to confirm your position.
- Back the truck CAREFULLY into its final position and set the brake.

